

Act No. 161 (S.20). Professions and occupations; Secretary of State; Office of Professional Regulation; dental; dental therapists

An act relating to establishing and regulating dental therapists

This act establishes a new profession of licensed dental practice called a “dental therapist.” The current dental professions – in order of education and experience requirements – are registered dental assistants, licensed dental hygienists, and licensed dentists. A dental therapist would be below a dentist in this hierarchy. The act states that the General Assembly’s intent in establishing this new profession is to increase access for Vermonters to oral health care, especially in areas with a significant volume of patients who have a low income or who are uninsured or underserved. As with the three existing professions, dental therapists will be regulated by the Board of Dental Examiners within the Office of Professional Regulation.

A dental therapist would be able to perform a limited number of the dental acts that a dentist can perform, but would be required to practice under a dentist’s general supervision pursuant to a collaborative agreement. The collaborative agreement would establish the parameters of the dental therapist’s practice. So, while the law would provide a ceiling on the acts that a dental therapist could perform, a collaborative agreement could further restrict those acts. Among other things, a collaborative agreement would also establish the amount of supervision required by the dentist and the types of patients a dental therapist could serve.

Effective Date: June 2, 2016